

VZCZCXRO2340
PP RUEHAG RUEHKW RUEHROV
DE RUEHLI #1418/01 1420742

ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 220742Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5897
INFO RUCNMUC/EU CANDIDATE STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUCNMEC/MIDDLE EAST MULTILATERAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 001418

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2017

TAGS: PREL PO
SUBJECT: PM'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR DETAILS PORTUGAL'S EU
PRESIDENCY AGENDA

REF: A. A) HARRINGTON-WOHLERS 5/8/07 EMAIL

- 1B. B) LISBON 557
- 1C. C) LISBON 253
- 1D. D) 06 LISBON 2269
- 1E. E) 06 LISBON 418

Classified By: Ambassador Alfred Hoffman for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

Summary

11. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador on May 21, the Prime Minister's senior diplomatic advisor said Portugal's EU presidency priorities would comprise summits with Africa, Brazil, India, China, Russia, and Ukraine. On internal EU issues, the GOP's primary focus will be advancing progress on the constitutional treaty -- any "constitutional" references in the current text would likely have to be expunged, although the GOP believes the Charter on Fundamental Rights must be maintained. On the Middle East, Portugal does not plan to press any particular agenda but would be prepared to react to events on the ground. The Prime Minister plans a mid-July trip to the region primarily to establish connections to the key players. Roza de Oliveira stressed Portugal's desire to work closely with us during the presidency -- "transparency will be our watchword," he said.
End Summary.

12. (U) Prime Minister Socrates's senior diplomatic advisor, Jorge Roza de Oliveira, invited the Ambassador to his office on May 21 to lay out Portugal's EU presidency agenda. Ambassador was accompanied by pol/econ counselor.

Summits

13. (C) Roza de Oliveira said Portugal would kick off its 6-month presidency with an EU Troika summit with Brazil on July 4, followed by a dinner that evening to which all EU heads of state and government had been invited. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has already agreed to attend. (Note: the MFA political director told us recently this would be the first EU-Brazil summit, and Portugal hopes to institutionalize it. End Note.)

14. (C) The EU will hold summits with India and China in those countries. Asked what the agendas would be for the two gatherings, Roza de Oliveira said they are still being developed and promised to share them with the Ambassador once finalized. With China, the arms embargo and their interest in attaining market economy status from the EU would certainly be discussed. The Ambassador asked whether climate change would be addressed, noting that India and China have in the past declined to sign on to international agreements such as Kyoto, citing concerns about the impact on economic growth. Roza de Oliveira commented that New Delhi and

Beijing are realizing that their current paths are having a very pernicious impact on the environment.

¶ 15. (C) Roza de Oliveira confirmed Portugal's intention to host a summit with Africa in early December. He said the two sides have been working on a common strategy -- to be endorsed at the summit -- covering joint action in a broad range of areas, including human rights and energy. Asked how Portugal planned to handle the issue of Zimbabwean President Mugabe's attendance, Roza de Oliveira was dismissive, claiming that the question of participation would resolve itself. Portugal would issue invitations to European nations plus Morocco, while the African Union would invite the African participants. If Mugabe attends, Roza de Oliveira surmised, the British Prime Minister would probably stay away, but he would likely be the only European head of government to do so. Mugabe is horrible, the diplomatic advisor asserted, but there are other leaders of concern in Africa as well. The Ambassador urged the GOP not to give Mugabe a platform but, if he does appear in Lisbon in the end, we hope the GOP and other European leaders will deliver a firm message to him on governance and human rights.

¶ 16. (C) An EU-Russia summit will also be held on Portugal's watch. Roza de Oliveira asserted that the Russians do not truly care whether Kosovo gains independence, but are using the issue to advance other interests. He noted that the Prime Minister plans to travel to Moscow the week of May 27 both to strengthen bilateral relations and to lay the groundwork for the summit. Roza de Oliveira surmised that Portugal may be more successful at soothing EU relations with Russia, as Moscow likely sees it as less of a threat than Germany. The key, though, is for the EU to send Russia a message that it cannot divide and conquer, that the EU stands

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together as one when Russia has difficulties with any one of its member states.

¶ 17. (C) The GOP hopes to hold a summit with Ukraine, but details are still a bit "dodgy" because it is unclear who will represent the Ukrainian side.

Constitutional Treaty

¶ 18. (C) The major internal EU issue that will consume the GOP's attention will be shepherding the mandate on the constitutional treaty that emerges from the June European Council, according to Roza de Oliveira. Member nations have had enough time to reflect after the French and Dutch no votes. Portugal's goal is to host an Inter-Governmental Conference that reaches agreement on the way forward by the time of the December 2007 European Council. Roza de Oliveira anticipated that any elements of the current text that "smack of constitution" would have to be jettisoned. In addition, the Charter of Fundamental Rights should be maintained, as that is what makes the EU much more than an integrated economic market, according to Roza de Oliveira, although he acknowledged lack of consensus among member states on that point. Five countries would be problematic during this process: France and Holland, given the prevailing public sentiments in those countries; Poland, which rejects the current text, noting it was approved by the previous government; the Czech Republic, which is hiding behind Poland but likely will drop its objections if Poland comes on board; and the United Kingdom, which wants major adjustments.

Middle East

¶ 19. (C) Asked about the Middle East, Roza de Oliveira said the GOP would not be pressing a particular agenda but would be prepared to react to developments on the ground. He noted that PM Socrates plans a mid-July visit to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Jerusalem, and Ramallah -- the

message he delivers will be shaped by the circumstances in the region at the time.

Kosovo

¶10. (C) Roza de Oliveira expressed his hope that the UN Security Council would agree soon on a Kosovo resolution and that there would not be a unilateral declaration of independence from the Kosovars. Kosovo is enormously complicated, he said, as some EU member countries see it as a precedent for other nationalist movements, and Serb militias will get increasingly trigger happy if the situation doesn't move in a direction they find acceptable.

Comment

¶11. (C) It was nice of Roza de Oliveira to reach out, although we have previously heard (and reported -- see refs) most of what he told us from other GOP interlocutors. On Kosovo, the Portuguese support the Ahtisaari plan, and are greatly concerned that the UNSC Resolution be approved soon, in order to avoid the "disastrous" consequence of a unilateral declaration of independence. The MFA political director told us recently the Prime Minister plans in Moscow to urge the Russians to come on board in support of the draft UNSCR -- that is a message the Portuguese have delivered to the Russians at all levels during the past several weeks. The Portuguese do not believe the EU presidency plays a determining role in the Middle East (which they say falls to the Council and Solana), but they are preparing to play a facilitative role, indicated by Foreign Minister Amado's two swings through the region to build relationships with key interlocutors, and the Prime Minister's plans to do the same.

Roza de Oliveira stressed that the Prime Minister would not, however, be making a stop in Syria. Regarding the EU-Africa summit, Roza de Oliveira confirmed that Portugal is willing to hold its nose and allow President Mugabe to attend, as it believes that is the only way to guarantee the widest possible participation by African nations.

Hoffman